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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 004074

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STATE FOR NEA/I, NEA/ARPI
ALSO FOR S/I AMB JAMES JEFFREY
NSC FOR CHARLES DUNNE
TREASURY FOR LARRY MCDONALD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [SA](#) [IR](#) [SY](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: MFA U/S ON IRAQ; WELCOMES IRAQ COORDINATOR'S VISIT

REF: A. STATE 176666

[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 4045

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ambassador met with MFA U/S Abdullah Rashid Al Noaimi September 24 to preview Iraq Coordinator Ambassador Jeffrey's October 8 visit to the UAE. She had earlier previewed the goals of the Jeffrey visit with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed and MinState for Foreign Affairs Hamdan bin Zayed (refs A, B). Al Noaimi said the UAEG would welcome the interagency consultations. It is time for Iraqis to hold a conference to achieve "national consensus" on the future of their country, he said, and Iraq's neighbors and the international community can be of help. Al Noaimi had also offered a briefing and insights about Iraq during a meeting September 20 with a visiting U.S. delegation; his comments during that meeting are also incorporated in this message. Al Noaimi advised the U.S. against withdrawing its troops until the Iraq security forces have the capacity to guarantee stability on their own, and indicated that the Iraqis might be willing to allow certain Arab and non-Arab Muslim forces on their soil. He also offered his views on the nature of the insurgency. End Summary.

Previewing Amb. Jeffrey's Visit

¶12. (C) Ambassador previewed the October 8 visit of Iraq Coordinator Jeffrey with MFA U/S Al Noaimi, noting that Ambassador Jeffrey and an interagency team were going to be stopping in other capitals in the region as part of a series of consultations with key Arab partners on Iraq (ref C). Ambassador highlighted the principal political, economic, and security themes of the consultations and acknowledged the UAE's ongoing assistance to Iraq and debt relief pledges. Ambassador urged accelerated disbursement of aid and implementation of debt relief commitments. She referred to her meetings earlier in the week with the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and MinState for Foreign Affairs, during which the Jeffrey visit had been discussed, and noted the September 20 analysis on Iraq Al Noaimi himself had offered (see paras 5-9).

Iraqis Need a Conference on National Consensus

¶13. (C) Ambassador urged UAE's public support for Iraq's political process, including posting an Ambassador to Baghdad. Al Noaimi agreed that Iraq's stability was essential to regional stability and in the interests of the UAE and the U.S. The Iraqis needed help from the international community, he stressed. "Given their present situation, they are unable to reinvent their future," Al Noaimi continued.

¶14. (C) Al Noaimi shared that he had come to that conclusion after meeting with Iraq's Ambassador to the UAE recently. "They cannot do it alone." It was time, he said, for the Iraqis to hold a conference that would achieve a national consensus on their future. "Put them in one room and let them realize the dangers facing them," he suggested. The Iraqis "need to agree on minimums and stop disagreeing on details. The details can be worked out later." The unity, stability, and prosperity of Iraq were in everyone's interest, Al Noaimi said. Al Noaimi noted Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal's recent remarks about Iraq heading toward disintegration, raising fears of a wider regional conflict that will draw the countries of the region into conflict. He cited Al Faisal's declaration that "We fought a war together to keep Iran out of Iraq after Iraq was driven out of Kuwait. Now we are handing the whole country over to Iran without any reason." Ambassador asked if there had been GCC consultation on this issue. Al Noaimi said that Al Faisal's comment had not been made "in a vacuum," but that he was "exaggerating to have an impact." Ambassador noted the need for the U.S. and the UAE to confer on strategies to pressure both Iran and Syria to respect Iraq's sovereignty.

Constitutional Referendum Approaches

¶15. (C) In his September 20 discussion with Ambassador and the visiting U.S. delegation from the Business Executives for National Security, Al Noaimi said that he expected additional violence in the run-up to the referendum, but predicted the Iraqis would approve the Constitution. He said that the UAE's leadership has tried to allay Iraqi Sunni fears about federalism by explaining its benefits, using the UAE as an example of a federal system that has not disintegrated. The UAE, which has had a provisional Constitution for the past two decades, has also advised Iraqis that their new Constitution could be provisional without putting the country in jeopardy. "The Constitution is a live document that can be developed," he said. Al Noaimi cautioned against focusing "too much" on the insurgency. "The insurgency will stay regardless. ... The more jobs you create, the higher the living standard, and the greater the security," the less Iraqis will want to "resist," he said.

Iraq Needs U.S. to Complete Job

¶16. (C) Al Noaimi also declared that said a U.S. troop

withdrawal from Iraq at this time "was not an option." The U.S. should not withdraw until Iraq "possesses the political and security capacity" to maintain stability on its own. "We have to be realistic. The minimum goal for the U.S. should be a stable, unified Iraq. You have to make sure (Iraq's) neighbors don't cause cracks in Iraq's body." The U.S. also needs to engage Arabs, NATO, and the UN, he said.

A Role for Other Arab States, Iraq's Neighbors

¶17. (C) In response to a question from the BENS delegation about other Arab states' and non-Arab Muslim forces on the ground in Iraq, Al Noaimi said Iraqis would possibly be receptive to the idea. Troops from some GCC and North African states, as well as from Sudan and Egypt, might be acceptable, he said. He said the Saudi-Iraqi power rivalry precluded placing Saudi troops in Iraq. (Note: He did not/not raise the issue of UAE troops, although UAE Special Operations troops are deployed to Afghanistan in OEF. End note.)

¶18. (C) Al Noaimi argued that a stable Iraq would be seen as a defeat by Iran, Syria, and Turkey, all of which have an interest in destabilizing all or part of Iraq. He said it would also mean defeat to Saudi Arabia, although to a lesser degree. A stable Iraq would be stronger than Saudi Arabia, he stated. The Saudis want to be the primary player on the oil market, but if Iraqi oil production capacity increases, that would increase the Iraqis' strength, he offered. Iraq would also want to join Saudi Arabia and Iran as regional powers.

Nature of the Insurgency

¶19. (C) Al Noaimi said the insurgency in Iraq was partly comprised of armed elements loyal to Saddam before he was ousted from power. The insurgency would continue with or without the adoption of the new Constitution, as it is "an organized reaction to disrupt future plans," Al Noaimi said. He added that prior to the Iraq invasion, no one knew that Saddam had organized such a force. Asked what should be done to counter the insurgency, Al Noaimi said the Coalition should continue building Iraq's military, security, and economic capacity. He suggested engaging NATO, particularly on the issue of beefing up border controls.

¶10. (C) Comment: Al Noaimi, like our other senior UAEG interlocutors, is convinced that Iran will be the winner in Iraq. UAEG perceptions of Iran's growing influence and concerns over Shi'a ascendancy are likely to feature in each of the conversations Ambassador Jeffrey and team have here October 8, as is criticism of PM Jaafari's performance and alleged ties to Tehran. End Comment.

¶11. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
SISON